

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
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R 191411Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5416
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN
USMTM RIYADH
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 3553

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, YE, SA
SUBJ: ARMS FOR YEMEN

1. ARRIVAL OF SUPERBLY QUALIFIED USAF - NORTHRUP TEAM HAS BEGUN TO GIVE OUR ASSURANCES ON MILITARY AID SOME BASIS OTHER THAN GOODMILL IN THE MINDS OF OFFICERS WND OFFICIALS HERE. US TEAM HAS MADE IT CLEAR THEY ARE GOING TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT IS NEEDED TO DELIVER FOUR F-5B'S TO YEMEN BEFORE 26 SEPTEMBER WITH ALL FACILITIES WHICH NEEDED TO SUPPORT THEM -- AND TRAINING PROGRAM -- IN SUCCEEDING MONTHS. YEMENIS HAVE RESPONDED WARMLY TO QUESTIONS TEAM IS ASKING AND CONFIDENCE IT PROJECTS.

2. LOOKING FORWARD TO CONFERENCE 25-29 JULY, AGENDA WHICH CHUSMTM HAS SUGGESTED LOOKS VERY GOOD. IT WILL ALLOW US TO GET INTO DETAILS ON SPECIFIC PROGRAMS LIKE ARTILLERY, ANTI-TANK DEFENSE, ETC. I WONDER, HOWEVER, IF INSTRUCTIONS ARE NOT NEEDED FROM SECSTATE TO
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COMMIT US TO MAKING SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TO SAUDIS AND TO OFFERING DIRECT AND OBSERVABLE US ROLE IN EXECUTION OF THESE PROPOSALS FOR YEMEN. PROPOSALS WILL, OF COURSE, REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE STAFF WORK IN WASHINGTON AS WELL AS IN RIYADH. IN OUR VIEW, USG ROLE IS CRITICAL IF PROGRAM HERE IS ACTUALLY TO ACCELERATE. THIS IS SIMPLE PRACTICAL MATTER ALTHOUGH IT HAS POLI-

TICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR SAUDIS AS WELL AS YEMENIS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR ASSURANCES OF OUR BONA FIDES.

3. SECOND, IT IS IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT QUESTION OF USG ROLE IN YEMEN AND IN JOINT PROGRAM WITH SAUDIS FROM POINT OF VIEW OF KINGDOM AS WELL AS FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. CANNOT STRESS TOO STRONGLY THAT EXPERIENCE OF THIS EMBASSY IN LAST THREE YEARS WITH SAUDI REPS HERE HAS CONVINCED US THAT THERE ARE SAUDI INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO INFORM US, EVEN TO MIS-INFORM US, RATHER THAN TO COOPERATE. SAUDIS HERE HAVE BEEN ACCESSIBLE AND AGREEABLE BUT THEY HAVE NOT COORDINATED THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH OURS AND HAVE REPEATEDLY SHOWN SIGNS OF SUSPICION AND ANTIPATHY WHERE US ROLE IS CONCERNED. JUST IN LAST WEEK SAUDI CHARGE AND CHIEF OF SAUDI MILITARY MISSION DESCENDED ON MILATT AND MYSELF, SEPARATELY, TO CHECK A (FALSE) REPORT THEY HAD ABOUT A NEW LIST OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WHICH WE HAD SHOWN YEMENIS. "ARE YOU SURE?" CHARGE KEPT ASKING. "THERE WAS NOTHING, NOTHING AT ALL LIKE THIS?"

4. WHAT WE NEED IS AGREEMENT, DURING 29 JULY MEETINGS, TO REGULAR AND FULL CONSULTATIONS IN RIYADH ON PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN YAR MILITARY. SPECIFICALLY WE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WHAT FRENCH AND SAUDIS ARE
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DOING AS WELL AS WHAT USG IS DOING. WE WANT TO BE PARTNERS. WE SHOULD ALSO GET SOMETHING FROM SULTAN TO REVERSE IMPRESSION THAT THIS PROGRAM IS NOT RPT NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE AMERICAN ROLE.

5. BELIEVE ABOVE CAN AND MUST BE DONE WITHOUT VEXING OUR SAUDI FRIENDS WITH IMPLICIT OR OTHER CRITICISM. WE COULD PROBABLY DO IT WITHOUT ACTUALLY ALTERING EXCHANGE OF LETTERS IN MAY 1976 WHICH SET OUT UNUSUAL SAUDI CONDITIONS FOR PROGRAM OPERATION. LEAVE LATTER TO DISCRETION OF EMBASSY JIDDA AND CHUSMTM BUT BELIEVE WE MUST SEEK AGREEMENT TO PRINCIPLE OF DIRECT US ROLE AND FULL CONSULTATION BETWEEN US AND SAUDIS IN YEMEN PROGRAM.

6. THIRD, WE MAY WANT STRESS AT RIYADH MEETING THAT OUR NEW EFFORTS HAVE IMPORTANT POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS. THEY MUST START SOON WITH SOMETHING THAT CAN BE CALLED AN IMPACT PACKAGE. F-5B EFFORTS ARE EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF WHAT IS NEEDED. IMPACT PROGRAM MEANS, IN OUR MIND, NOT NECESSARILY THAT WE SELL NEW EQUIPMENT BUT, THAT DELIVERIES OF SOME

EQUIPMENT ALREADY SOLD HAVE TO BE ACCELERATED AND, PERHAPS, SOME ARRANGEMENTS MADE TO FLY IT IN IN STARLIFTERS. IT MEANS EARLY ARRIVAL OF TRAINING TEAMS. IT MEANS PLANNING FOR FOLLOW-ON SO THAT PROGRAM DOES NOT SAG AFTER INITIAL EFFORTS. IT MEANS SOME HIGH-LEVEL VISITS TO YAR BY AMERICAN OFFICERS AND VISITS TO US BY YEMENI OFFICERS. WE THINK, STILL IN PSYCHOLOGICAL AREA, THAT YEMENIS COULD MOUNT, WITH SOME ADVICE, IMPRESSIVE LIVE FIRE MANEUVERS USING WESTERN EQUIPMENT DURING SEPTEMBER 26 CELEBRATIONS. US 105'S AND 106'S, FRENCH ARMORED CARS AND PERSONNEL CARRIERS, F-5'S SWOOPING IN -- A GOOD SHOW. DIPLOMACY IS PART THEATER.

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7. THIS BRINGS UP FOURTH POINT. YAR PRESIDENT ALI ABDALLAH SALIH HAS ASKED FOR ARMED FORCES WHICH IS EQUIVALENT OF THOSE IN SOUTH AND ASKED FOR AGREEMENTS WHICH WILL CONVEY POLITICAL COMMITMENT. NEITHER ARE REQUESTS, I SUSPECT, THAT WE CAN OR WANT TO ENDORSE. WHAT WE MIGHT DO, INSTEAD, IS SUGGEST TO SAUDIS THAT THEY GIVE SOME SUBSTANCE TO THEIR COMMITMENT TO DEFEND YAR FROM ATTACK BY STAGING MANEUVERS HERE WITH RSAF F-5 UNIT AND PERHAPS SOME SUPPORTING UNITS OF ARTILLERY OF SORT PROVIDED TO YAR. THEY COULD JOIN IN LIVE FIRE EXERCISE MENTIONED EARLIER. IF YEMENIS ARE REALLY LOOKING FOR EQUIVALENT FORCES, AND WE WANT SUBSTITUTE REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR UNNECESSARY

EQUIPMENT SALES, WE COULD SUGGEST WELL-PUBLICIZED EXERCISES WHICH INVOLVE OMANIS AND IRANIANS IN DHOFAR AND SAUDI AS WELL AS EXILE FORCES IN SHARURAH. JOINT NAVAL OPERATIONS IN INDIAN OCEAN, INVOLVING U.S. FORCES, COULD ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION TO POLITICAL OUT-LOOK IN AREA WHERE SOVIETS NOW HAVE MASSIVE FORCES -- HUNDREDS OF AIRCRAFT, FLOTILLA WITH AMPHIBIOUS AND BLUE SECRET

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WATER CAPABILITY, BALANCED GROUND ATTACK FORCES, A RECORD OF COMBAT. WHILE WE COME TO THIS SUGGESTION FROM YEMENI PERSPECTIVE, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT WORRIED SAUDIS AND OVER-CONFIDENT SOVIETS MIGHT ALSO FIND IT INSTRUCTIVE.

8. THERE ARE JUST THREE MORE POINTS WHICH WE MIGHT RAISE IN ADVANCE OF MEETINGS IN RIYADH.

9. IN CASE OF SALES TO YEMEN, DEPARTMENT OF ARMY MADE SPECIFIC EXCEPTION OF LONG-ESTABLISHED POLICY NOT RPT NOT TO SELL EQUIPMENT WITHOUT INCLUDING TRAINING, ADVANCES SURVEYS, ETC. SAUDIS WERE TO PROVIDE THIS. WE THINK IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO REVIEW EACH SALES CASE WHICH SIGNED SO FAR TO DETERMINE WHAT WE WOULD HAVE DONE. OVER TWO THOUSAND TRUCKS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DELIVERED TO THIS COUNTRY WITH LITTLE OR NO PROVISION FOR MAINTENANCE OR TRAINING, SO FAR AS WE KNOW.

10. WE HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND THAT IN ENTIRE \$150 MILLION PACKAGE WHICH WE HAVE SOLD TO YAR ONLY WEAPONS ARE 50 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS (WORLD WAR II MODEL) AND 81 MM MORTAR, PLUS LAW, HOWITZERS AND VULCAN. LAST IS ONLY ITEM WHICH MATTERS MUCH TO YEMENIS. WE WONDER, THEREFORE, IF WE ARE GOING TO GET ANY PRESSURE TO PROVIDE YEMENIS WITH OTHER TYPES OF WEAPONS, LIKE TOW.

11. LAST POINT CONCERNS F-5'S. PRESENT GUIDANCE OF TEAM IN SANA LIMITS EFFORTS TO GETTING MACHINES TO FLY. TEAM WAS INSTRUCTED TO AVOID DISCUSSION ORDNANCE AND TRAINING IN ITS USE. THIS WON'T SELL IN YAR EXCEPT IN SHORT TERM. PLANS HAVE TO BE MADE TO PROVIDE SECRET

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THESE AIRCRAFT WITH SIDEWINDERS, IRON BOMBS, GUN PODS AND 2.75" ROCKETS. SIMILARLY, WE SHOULD MAKE SURE

THAT SAUDIS HAVE SOME PLANS, AS 12 F-5B'S ARE
PHASED IN OVER TWO OR THREE YEAR RPT YEAR PRODUCTION
PERIOD, TO KEEP 23 PRESENT PLANE AIR FORCE OF YEMENIS
IN AIR. YEMENIS WON'T GO WITHOUT, OR RELY ON 4
TOOTHLESS F-5B'S. PERHAPS PAKS OR EGYPTIANS
COULD MAINTAIN MIGS, HELP WITH SPARES.
RANSOM

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